Oswald, Lee H. Post-Russian Period

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CNS/bh

February 12, 1964

MEMORANDUM

To: Howard P. Willens

From: Charles N. Shaffer

Subject: Mexico Allegation First Furnished by White House.

You will recollect that information was received from the White House some time ago that it had been informed of an allegation that Lee Harvey Oswald on October 2, 1963, met the Cuban Ambassador to Mexico (Joaquin Hernandez Armas) in a restaurant on the outskirts of Mexico City, from where they both later departed in the Ambassador's automobile for a private conversation.

Both the FBI and the CIA had been looking into the matter and on February 11, 1964, the former transmitted to the Commission the attached letter accompanied by a letterhead memorandum dated January 29, 1964 and the report of Special Agent James J. O'Connor dated January 23, 1964.

The Bureau memorandum shows that Edwardo Borrell Navarro--the source of the allegation--was interviewed by a confidential entity (most probably the Mexican federal police) for the Bureau on January 11, 1964. In his interview Borrell admits talking with Salvador Diaz Verson in Mexico City about Lee Harvey Oswald during the pertinent period, but denies the allegation credited to him.

Special Agent James J. O'Connor report dated January 23, 1964, sets forth interviews of:

1. Salvador Diaz Verson, a Cuban exile at Miami, Florida, who states he met Dr. E. B. Navarro and heard him state the allegation which he passed on to Dr. Angel Hernandez Varela;

2. Dr. Angel Hernandez Varela, a Miami resident and Cuban exile, who is presently engaged in "Voz de Cuba" work. In his interview Varela admits receiving the allegation from Dr. Salvador Diaz Verson and passing it on to Dr. Jose Ignazio Lasaga; and

3. Dr. Jose Ignazio Lasaga, Miami resident and Cuban exile who is working as a chief clinical psychologist for the Catholic Welfare Service at Miami, Florida. In his interview he admits receiving the allegation from Dr. Angel Hernandez Varela and passing it on to the White House in connection with a hypothetical treatise dealing with Oswald's motivation in the assassination.

While there is some variation in the transmission of the allegation--due no doubt to its three relays--the substance of the allegation involves persons whomwe know may have come in contact with Oswald during his Mexican trip occurring between September 27 and October 2, 1963. These include: Sylvia Duran, a Cuban Consulate employee who allegedly arranged the meeting between Oswald and a Cuban Embassy officer, which might be either Cuban Ambassador Joaquin Hernandes Armas or the Cuban Consul Eusebio Azcue Lopez. By separate information we know that both Duran and Azcue have admitted contact with Oswald.

The restaurant involved in the allegation is probably the Caballo Bayo Restaurant located on the outskirts of Mexico City. Investigation at this location by the Bureau's confidential entity advises that it included the exhibition of the photographs of Lopez, Armas, Duran and Oswald among the employees with negative results.

I am of the opinion that the matter should be further investigated. It is significant to note that the Bureau characterizes the memorandum and report of the Special Agent as "documents setting forth the results of our investigation of Dr. Lasaga's allegation."

This statement, together with the Bureau's notation that Dr. Navarro has denied the incident credited to him, leads one to believe that in the absence of a specific request the Bureau does not intend to further pursue the matter.

Obviously Salvador Diaz Verson told Dr. Angel Hernandez Varela of the allegation, who in turn told it to Dr. Jose Ignazio Lasago. The question is whether it originated with Edwardo Borrell Navarro or Salvador Diaz Verson. It seems to me the Bureau could attempt to obtain a polygraph examination of Salvador Diaz Verson, a Miami resident. After the result of such an examination is known, it may be advisable to do the same with Edwardo Borrell Navarro through their confidential entity in Mexico.

In evaluating this allegation, we should keep in mind:

1. The unrelated and similar statement of Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte (referred to at pages 11 to 14 of CIA report dated January 31, 1964, Commission Exhibit No. 347) who alleged that Lee Harvey Oswald received $6,500 in the Cuban Embassy during his trip to Mexico;

2. In connection with the allegation attributed to Edwardo Borrell Navarro that Oswald stayed at Sylvia Duran's home, it is a fact that he had contact with Duran while in Mexico and her name appears in the notebook (at page 47) found on his person at the time of his arrest; and

3. The Bureau makes no formal evaluation of the content of the memorandum dated January 29, 1964, and Special Agent O'Connor's report dated January 23, 1964, and they should be urged to do so--setting forth reasons--in view of their recent willingness to evaluate and conclude.

I am preparing a letter to the Director for Mr. Rankin's signature requesting that the Bureau follow up on the polygraph suggestion.